

Matthew 5-7

I. The King is revealed (1-3) II. The Kingdom is revealed (4-10)

A. In Principle (4-7)

1. The Messiah declares his faith. (4:1-11)
2. The Messiah demonstrates his faith. (4:12-25)

"And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more," **Rom.5:20**

"therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith." **Gal.3:24**

Chapter 5 tells us about the moral standards of the Kingdom and the brokenness that the moral law (rightly understood) will produce in God's people drawing them to their King Redeemer.

3. The Messiah defines the true nature of Kingdom life: The sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)

a. The character of Kingdom people (5:1-12)

The purpose of the captivity of Israel leading up to the coming of Messiah was brokenness of spirit, humility, and willingness to receive the love of God through the Messianic mission. The beatitudes summarize the kind of heart that will inherit the blessings of the Kingdom age. The word BEATITUDE comes from the Latin word for "blessing" meaning "to be congratulated".

In a real sense, what follows is a description of Jesus.

1. Attitude toward self: humble hunger for righteousness (5:1-6)

1 And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 And opening His mouth He {began} to teach them, saying, 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

- These first beatitudes pronounce a blessing on penitent hearts. They are a promise that the pain is just about over. The key words here all are to be associated with the brokenness of spirit.

2. Attitude toward others: passion for peace (5:7-9)

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

- A broken heart will be seen in a gracious social posture.

3. Attitude toward enemies: joy in face of persecution (5:10-12)

10 Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when {men} cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of

Me. 12 Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- These who find their hope in Messiah will suffer persecution and ridicule. This suffering is to be put in the broader context of blessing as the Kingdom is revealed.

b. The calling of Kingdom people (5:13-16)

- If the beatitudes describe the inner character of a child of the Kingdom, the following verses tell us how that character is to impact the outer culture or world.

1. Salt: "I have been crucified with Christ" (5:13)

13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty {again}? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

- What is salt and what is light? Are they related to the character described in the beatitudes?
- The remnant of penitent Jews are to set the pace for the nation. They are to take care not to lose their edge as expressed in the beatitudes.

2. Light: "Christ liveth in me" (5:14-16)

14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do {men} light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

c. The conduct of Kingdom people (5:17-7:27)

1. True Sanctification (5:17-48)

a. The letter of the law. (5:17-20)

17 Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches {them,} he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses {that} of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

- The standards of righteousness demanded by God is very great. Every bit of the Law's demands must be fulfilled before there can be participation in the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus claim to "fulfill" the Law's demands is best understood as a reference to His sinless life and substitutionary death.

b. The spirit of the law. (5:21-48)

- Lest there be a misunderstanding of how deeply the demands of the Law reach, we are to understand that no one leaves with confidence in his or her self-righteousness.
- This teaching is designed to convict all of their need for a savior, not confirm some over against others.

1. with respect to how we treat others (5:21-26)

21 You have heard that the ancients were told, ' *You shall not commit murder*' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22 But

I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty {enough to go} into the fiery hell. 23 If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. 25 Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent.

- These first beatitudes pronounce a blessing on penitent hearts. They are a promise that the pain is just about over.

2. with respect to how we treat marriage (5:27-32)

27 You have heard that it was said, ' *You shall not commit adultery*'; 28 but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. 30 And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell. 31 And it was said, ' *Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce*'; 32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for {the} cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

- These first beatitudes pronounce a blessing on penitent hearts. They are a promise that the pain is just about over.
- Jesus does not expect people to solve a problem of lust by removing their eye as lust is in the mind. The point is that the breaking of the law is an eternal life and death matter.
- The reference to "unchastity" in verse 32 is best understood as unfaithfulness during betrothal or in the case of unlawful marriage.
- The unlawfully divorced woman (assuming she remarries) will be an adulterous.

3. with respect to how we treat oaths (5:33-37)

33 Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ' *You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord*.' 34 But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is *the city of the great King*. 36 Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' {or} 'No, no'; and anything beyond these is of evil.

- Kingdom people should not need to make an oath. Their word should be good enough without a contract of blessing and cursing attached.

4. with respect to how we treat evil doers (5:38-42)

38 You have heard that it was said, ' *An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*.' 39 But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone wants

to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

- Don't seek revenge or even justice but seek to bless those who would mistreat you. This is a sure sign that your hope is beyond this life.
- This text (taken literally) has been the basis of Christian pacifism. The context is injustice to oneself. It does not suggest that we should stand by and watch others be abused without helping.

5. with respect to how we treat our enemies (5:43-48)

43 "You have heard that it was said, ' *You shall love your neighbor*, and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you 45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on {the} evil and {the} good, and sends rain on {the} righteous and {the} unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? 47 And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more {than others}? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- Even our enemies are to be blessed. "Perfect" vs.48 is rendered "fully grown" in Paul's writing.

Chapter 6 addresses one of the most sensitive areas of our lives - **security**. We desire to impress others with our spirituality so as to be admired and accepted. We desire to find comfort in material possessions.

2. False sanctification (6:1-18)

- It is not enough to do the right thing if the motivation is selfish.
- Three criteria for righteous conduct - 1) Is the act consistent with the commands of Scripture? 2) Is the act motivated by love? 3) Is the act sensitive to context (time)?

a. Looking good with respect to giving (6:1-4)

- There is a human motivation for religious showboating - To be accepted in the community.
- Our fear is that if people see us for who we really are they will reject us. We want to be sure that they notice our good deed not to glorify God but to glorify us and thus give us tenure in the community.

1 Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2 When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing 4 that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

b. Looking good with respect to praying (6:5-15)

- The lessons we can learn about prayer in this text are 1) Be careful that public prayers are really to God not to the community. 2) God is not hard of hearing. 3)
- The Lord's prayer is really the disciples prayer and is a balance between spiritual and material concerns. It is best understood under the Old Covenant. Our forgiveness of others is the standard for our forgiveness by God. This is Old Covenant theology and it is why many evangelicals do not use the prayer in public services. **Eph.4:32**

5 And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. 7 And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Therefore do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him.

9 Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.' 14 For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

c. Looking good with respect to fasting (6:16-18)

When we suffer as a result of our religious discipline we want others to notice so we will get our due credit.

16 And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites {do,} for they neglect their appearance in order to be seen fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face 18 so that you may not be seen fasting by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

3. With respect to true and false security (6:19-34)

- Jesus had more to say about material possessions than about heaven and hell combined. He was less concerned with what money could do for those in need of material help than what it did to those who found their soul's security in it.
- His emphasis was clearly nonmaterial. This challenges a Marxist view which reduces all ethics to redistribution of material wealth.

a. "you can't serve two masters" (6:19-24)

- We can't have it both ways. This is one of the great temptations of the world. The suggestion is that the saving of material goods for our security can be inconsistent with Kingdom faith.
- How we see things will determine how we respond to them.

19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

b. "your Father knows your needs" (6:25-32)

- Anxiety is inconsistent with faith. The object lessons from nature are powerful in that they suggest active involvement without anxiety. Birds work hard but do not worry.
- The essence of a secular attitude is to define reality and make decisions as if God is not there or can not be trusted. It also can be understood as focusing our hope on the material and temporal at the expense of the spiritual and eternal.

25 For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, {as to} what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, {as to} what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and {yet} your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a {single} cubit to his life's span? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29 yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. 30 But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is {alive} today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, {will He} not much more {do so for} you, O men of little faith? 31 Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' 32 For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

c. “seek first the Kingdom of God” (6:33-34)

The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. **I Tim.6:6**

33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. "Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. {Each} day has enough trouble of its own."

Chapter 7 continues to delineate the conduct that is expected of those who are a part of God's Kingdom. The way we approach personal needs and problems is a vital part of our witness as is the way we identify the pitfalls that threaten to distract us from the way of God.

d. “judge self first” (7:1-6)

How am I to respond to the blind spots in others and to my own areas of weakness?

1. The critic must submit to his own laws (7:1-2)

¹ “Do not judge lest you be judged. ² For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

- Jesus is not promoting radical tolerance here as some suggest because he and his disciples were often expected to pass judgment. I Cor.5:12, 6:1-5.
- He is addressing the Pharisee's tendency to judge the motives of others in going beyond the letter of the Law. I Cor.4:5-6
- Note Jesus words in **Jn.7:24** "Do not judge according to appearances, but judge with righteous judgment."

2. The critic must start with his own logs (7:3-5)

3 And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

- Hypocrisy is a repeated theme in chapters 6-7. The Pharisees tended to discern the smallest problem in others while ignoring the massive pride and foolishness in themselves.
- The challenge of "blind spots" in our lives is the focus. It is too easy to see the blind spots in another than to be realistic about our own moral "soft spots" and failures.
- The instruction is 1) deal with your own stuff before 2) dealing with another's problem.
- Note that Jesus is not attacking the idea of a normative moral standard of right and wrong. Nor is He attacking the ability or need for discerning good and evil. He is attacking judgment without discernment of 1) one's own soul, 2) the proper authority or responsibility to judge others (family, church, government), and 3) the proper motive for doing so (speaking truth in love at the right time).

3. The critic must be sensitive to his own limits (7:6)

6 Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

- The first test of proper judgment is knowing what, when, and who to judge.
- Proverbs 9:8 "Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you."

e. "ask, seek, knock" (7:7-12)

7 Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a

snake, will he? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! ¹² Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

- In contrast to the humility with which we view others, we are to be assertive and bold in bringing our needs to God.
- Assertiveness before God, as our source, is not presumptuous but commanded. Note: Jesus does not promise us “loaves” or “fish” but He does promise us “good things.” We will get what we need as we ask, seek, and knock.
- There may be a link between this paragraph and what has gone before (vs. 1-6) in that both deal with the need for wisdom in discerning.
- Verse 12 is a summary of vs. 1-11 where we are to judge as we would expect to be judged, and be given to as we would give to our children.

5. With respect to false scenarios (7:13-27)

a. Paths. (7:13-14)

¹³ Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. ¹⁴ For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

- The Jewish disciples would have expected the Messianic age to be a wide gate that all would see and pass through. It is shocking to hear Jesus talk about a remnant or narrow gate that would exclude many.
- We must not expect the message of the Kingdom to be popular with all people.

b. Prophets (7:15-23)

¹⁵ Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn {bushes,} nor figs from thistles, are they? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ So then, you will know them by their fruits. ²¹ Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*’

- Getting the words right is one thing but don't be fooled by thinking that it is sufficient. Words can easily be used to abuse and exploit others.
- False claims by people with respect to their relationship to God are not uncommon. They are identified in part by their lack of integrity. They look good on the outside but are consumers (not caretakers) of the people. It's not what they say but what they do that gives them authority. The kind of environment that the religious leaders of Jesus day created did not look like the Kingdom that Jesus was proclaiming.
- Verse 21 says nothing about the validity of the claims made of Godly ministry by the religious leaders. It only notes that there are those who "claim" to have done great things in the name of Jesus.
- Jesus makes it very clear that our dramatic accomplishments do not assure a relationship with Him.

c. Platforms (7:24-27)

24 Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and {yet} it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall. 28 The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; 29 for He was teaching them as {one} having authority, and not as their scribes."

- Wisdom should be our goal. The person who takes Jesus' teaching to heart will be stable and weather the storms of reality well but the person who does not will suffer greatly.
- The disciples could see that Jesus' life was consistent with his teaching and that his teaching struck at the heart of reality. It rang true and was welcomed.